

UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY FORMED BY COMMUNIST GROUPS

COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY AND MAJORITY OF COMMUNIST PARTY UNITE THROUGH SECRET CONVENTION.

From a copy of the "Communist" which declares itself the "official organ of the United Communist Party," we reprint the following story describing the unity convention of the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party:

The Convention of the Revolutionists.

During the first week of September, 1919 there were organized in the United States two Communist parties. Within two months both parties together had completed an enrollment of more than 40,000 dues-paying members. The prospects pointed to a quick increase to 60,000, perhaps 70,000;—about three-fourths of the former Socialist Party membership.

Along came the Lusk Committee raids and arrests in New York; also sporadic arrests elsewhere in connection with the November 7th celebration. Organization of Communists was checked. Came an ominous lull then the avalanche of the New Year—then the Palmer nation wide raids, arrests, brutalities.

At the end of January Secretary of Labor Wilson held that alien members of the Communist Party were subject to deportation. Communists—members of both parties—were branded as outlaws in the courts of New York and New Jersey. Like results appeared imminent in Massachusetts, Illinois, Michigan, California, Ohio, Indiana, in many other states.

No longer were there party headquarters, neither national, state, nor local. The active party officials were in jail or were fugitives. No meetings could be held without inviting arrests. Very little money could be raised even for defense and relief of prisoners.

By February 1920 the two thriving parties of October 1919 had vanished. The Lusk and Palmerites had done their work completely, perfectly. This country was immunized from the "red" terror—the terror which haunts the world...

Sometime recently, somewhere between the Atlantic and Pacific, between the Gulf and the Great Lakes, two groups of elected delegates assembled as the Unity Conference of the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. Of the former, 32; of the latter, 25, and one fraternal delegate; also a representative of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. These 59 delegates came together from all parts of the United States, held sessions for seven days, debated every issue with absolute thoroughness, laid out the plan of work for the United Communist Party—all under the most perfect circumstances conceivable for such a convention.

One who holds in his hand the record of this mysterious gathering is amazed, for one thing, at the roll of delegates. Communist Party and Communist Labor Party—but all these strange names? Not one of the 1919 Communists present! Search the roll again;—not one familiar name. Remarkable achievement of the Lusk-Palmer Inquisition—not one of the 1919 Communists in the list!

In spite of the fact that these delegates came together on a call for a "Unity Conference," in spite of all realized of the fearful blow it would be to the Communist movement in this country if unity were

stipulation: that every provision was open to amendment by the convention; that there might be a new division on the issues to come up, but the old party division was gone.

A bolt of nine or ten of the C. P. delegates was started. Klein (C. L. P.) re-introduced the motion to proceed with the discussion of the Program and Peace was restored.

The opening debates were sparring matches, with a strong undercurrent of nervousness. Threescore persons, engaged in a criminal conspiracy, spent two hours to decide whether capitalism breaks down in that it fails to "produce" the needs of life, or whether the collapse is due to the failure to "provide." After considerable uncertainty the argument prevailed that capitalism, in spite of all its equipment, stultifies production; the wheels of industry turn only at the call of profit, regardless of all capabilities for production; crisis or no crisis, capitalism has never functioned to "provide" the needs of the masses.

In the playfulness of this debate was expressed relaxation and the forestalling of another premature clash. This was the safe way of "getting acquainted"—the suppressed form of the struggle for unity.

Restrained resentment and suspicion broke loose into a furious storm during the next session. At the first statement in the Program concerning the overthrow of the capitalist system it was insisted that the word "forcible" be added. Likewise, at the first mention of "conquest of political power" it was demanded that there be added "by the use of armed force." One amendment was piled upon another—a veritable "force" panic.

In vain was it argued that this part of the Program contained only preliminary definitions, statements of the goal to be achieved; that the Program, under appropriate subdivisions, gave full attention to the methods of action; stand by itself, but is the inevitable that the item of armed force does not culminate in aspect of "mass action"; that this tactic must be presented in its developmental character—armed uprising as the unavoidable sequence of the advancing class conflict.

The C. L. P. delegates, for the most part, were ready for a test of strength against the C. P. "irreconcilables." They were conscious that this minority would have to accept defeat, since the point to be voted was only on what page something should be stated in the Program. Others sensed too much danger of misunderstanding behind such a vote, too much anger where agreement could easily be reached. Caxton moved to recommit this part of the Program, then to adjourn. There were some protests, but the motion prevailed. Meanwhile the tension was relaxed by the brilliant satirical speech of Sherwood, whose Yankee wit was the perfect antidote for passionate argument on an artificially stimulated issue.

The C. P. night caucus which followed, the amendments proposed by the Joint Committee, and a decision to dispose first of the section on "Mass Action," gave the convention smooth sailing the next morning.

A spirited debate ensued on the proposition to limit nominations to legislative officers, according to the clause of the C. P. Program. The issue was not clear-cut, since the anti-parliamentarians took the way of expressing opposition to all nominations. Brown (C. L. P.) and some of the C. P. speakers argued directly against nominations of any kind. Damon (C. P.) contended that this

will form a basis for a national organization of the economic life of the country.

Rykov discussed at great length the problems connected with the exploitation of the immense national wealth of the country. Immense stores of slate, coal and oil are now available. Especially, there are great supplies of slate and peat in the Volga valley, he said.

"The utilization of slate is a new field, which received no attention in Russia during the former regimes, but which has been fully studied and worked up by the Soviet Government," Rykov declared. "The preliminary experiments in this field have been completed, and two big government plants are now exclusively exploiting the slate deposits. Deposits of slate and peat are immense. They exist in North Russia as well as in the Volga valley. This kind of fuel is very bulky and cannot be transported. Peat and slate must be utilized on the spot, and electrical energy derived therefrom made to supply the needs of the surrounding territory. This condition led the Supreme Council of National Economy eighteen months ago to undertake the building of gigantic power stations which would use on the spot the available peat and slate supplies. Provincial cities and rural organizations have also taken steps for the electrification of their territory. It is necessary to consolidate these efforts and to create a unified, centralized system of supplying electric power, whereby the utmost attention must be given to supplying electricity to the rural communities. The realization of these plans would greatly accelerate the development of relations between the cities and rural communities."

After outlining the success of the soviet army on the various fronts, Trotsky emphasized the necessity for the establishment of universal labor service, which under a Socialist state, he stated, was a very different matter from compulsory labor under conditions of private ownership. He declared that the enthusiasm of the Red Army must be borrowed by the workers, and that the peasants particularly must be educated in the role which they must play for their own salvation.

"Our most dangerous front at this time is the economic front," he said. "Our greatest problem at the present moment is the organization of a large reserve of supplies. There is no doubt that we shall solve this problem as we have solved all our problems, thanks to the heroism of the working class."

The inspiring of the railroad workers with a full sense of the necessity for rebuilding Russia's transportation was emphasized also by Krassin, peoples' commissar of Ways and Communications, who declared that a transportation crisis now prevails not only in Russia, but in every other European country. Krassin stated that the efforts of sections of the Red Army diverted to railroad service had within one month increased the number of supply trains to Moscow by 20 per cent, and the services of many thousands of the labor army would soon rebuild the country's rail system.

The Commissar of Supplies, Zuzup, reported the existence of supplies of grain 50 per cent greater than for the corresponding period in 1919, but declared that it had at its disposal 1,221,000,000 pounds of grain, 234,000,000 of meat, 828,000,000 of potatoes, and 3,600,000 of dried vegetables. Zuzup stated that the willingness of the peasant population regularly to supply foodstuffs was rapidly increasing, and that the commissariat was developing means of distributing game and dairy products from the agricultural districts to the cities.

Because of the criticism encountered by this department, the Executive Committee appointed a committee of three to reorganize its activities. The committee consisted of one member each from the Executive committee, the Commissariat and the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions.

accepted. In the sentence, "A Communist who belongs to the A. F. of L., on account of absolute job necessity should seize every opportunity to voice his hostility to this organization, not to reform it but to destroy it," there was eliminated the phrase "on account of absolute job necessity." The sentence, "A stronger I. W. W. must be built," was stricken out.

The unity issue flared up again on the question of party name. On the first vote there were 22 counted for "Communist Party," 24 against. A roll call was demanded: The C. P. names were read first: 30 votes were recorded for "Communist Party." The C. L. P. delegates resented what they considered a coercive vote without any chance for discussion. An indignation speech was made by Flynn which proved the moral power of effective minority criticism;—with the opening of the next session came a ballot vote on "United Communist Party" or "Communist Party" with "united" written underneath. The vote was 33 to 22 for "United Communist Party."

This appeared to be the real achievement of unity, the breakdown of the old party lines... But there were still the elections.

Two important debates came under the consideration of the Constitution, one on party centralization, the other on federations.

In the first instance the issue of centralization came up on the amendment making the C. E. C. appointment and removal of organizers subject to the approval of the district executive committees. On the one side it was argued that this meant the substitution of autonomous districts for autonomous federations, a central executive shorn of real authority and real capability of action; that democracy was not to be obtained by decentralization but only by some effective means for control of the central authority; that district committees would lend themselves more easily to factional manipulation than the central committee elected in a national convention by delegates well known to the members. It was urged that an underground party must have the possibility of instant decision and action by a small committee; it must act as a single machine, else it can never strike a decisive blow.

Lack of confidence in officials was argument. The party affairs, it was argued, must be brought nearer to the control of the rank and file. The central committees had been the breeding place of factional controversies. It was not asking much to give the district committees a veto in the choice of the organizers upon whom their work depended.

Upon the first vote the amendment was declared adopted. It then appeared that some of the delegates had misinterpreted the proposition to be one of appointing all organizers "from the top downward," that is, sub-district, section, branch and group organizers as well as the district organizers. A motion to reconsider was made and declared lost. Then followed a keen battle, led by Damon, which finally resulted—after three roll calls—in a reversal of the original vote, 34 to 20.

On the federation question the Joint Committee had come to no agreement. In curious contrast to the history of last Summer, it was the C. L. P. committee members who were loath to take a rigorous stand against federations. At the convention the C. L. P. delegates took no group stand on this question. Two plans were presented, one for the C. P. delegates by Damon, the other by Dubner and Raphaeloff for the federation members of the C. L. P. The debate was largely between the federation delegates on both sides. The principal controversy was as to the existence of national executive

committees for the language groups, this proposal being decisively voted down.

Late in the afternoon of the fourth day of the joint sessions it was decided to proceed with elections of party officials. There had been many hours of caucusing on each side as to elections. Regardless of the sentiment of the convention expressed by a majority vote against further caucuses, neither side was willing to risk a surrender of its group strength.

A motion was made by Spark (C. P.) that the C. E. C. be composed of the five C. P. delegates and four C. L. P. delegates receiving the highest votes, without contest as between the C. P. and C. L. P. candidates. The motion was not supported.

Brown and Caxton were the nominees for International Secretary. Brown, 30, Caxton 23.

With two to elect, there were four nominees for International Delegate. The vote stood Damon 30, Meyer (C. L. P.) 28, Caxton 26, Barry (C. L. P.) 26... The lines were not holding; four C. P. votes had been divided between Meyer and Barry.

Then came ten nominations for the nine places on the C. E. C. Damon, Scott, Reinhardt, Delion, Zemlin, (C. P.); Meyer, Klein, Flynn, Brown, Dawson, (C. L. P.). These were the caucus nominations. Obviously the C. L. P. caucus had determined to avail itself of the discussions in the C. P. ranks and to attempt to elect a majority of the committee.

At the night session was announced the result of the balloting: Damon, Scott, Klein, Flynn, 29; Brown 33, Dawson, 32, Meyer, 30; Reinhardt, 26; Delion, Zemlin, tied at 24.

Damon, Scott and Reinhardt quickly offered their resignations. A bitter discussion was precipitated. Both sides had played for "control" and the result had been a boomers; for how, it was argued, could the C. P. delegates report back to their members that they had been outwitted in strategy in a way to give the minority control of the united party? Even though the fault was that of the C. P. delegates themselves, how could that remedy the outside situation?

The C. L. P. speakers vehemently answered that what was done was the result of the will of the convention; that it was outrageous for members to resign from the C. E. C. simply because they felt they could not boss the committee and the party; that, after all, this outcome of the elections would be the best proof to the members that the old party lines had been forgotten.

A motion for a recess of half an hour was adopted. Then began the tug of war which went into the middle of the night, only to be resumed the next morning—the two groups, apparently completely welded, now standing sharply apart as C. P. and C. L. P. The convention vanished; in its place were two caucuses, with committees for interchange of offers and counter-proposals.

The strained item in the C. P. camp had been an attack upon Caxton, based on the "majority" C. P. criticisms. In the C. P. caucus, after long discussion, he had been nominated for the C. E. C., 18 to 9. Later Caxton withdrew his name. Now it was insisted his name reintroduced, making Zemlin first substitute. The C. L. P. offered to substitute Caxton for Brown as International Secretary.

The last morning found the situation deadlocked. To open the convention again meant to give the C. P. the advantage of the renewed caucus pressure in favor of solidarity for C. P. control, all questions of personality aside. The issue of control having been precipitated by the turn of the elections, the C. P. delegates were in no mood to give up their demand for a majority of the C. E. C.

The C. P. delegates made only one demand, to reopen the convention. It was for the other side to make the next move...

There is nothing in the official record which suggests under what sort of surroundings all these things happened. As a matter of fact the physical surroundings had a very important part in the struggle for unity;—which is not at all illuminating to the reader who is asked to wait a few years for a description of these surroundings.

Besides, how is one to visualize one group of delegates in heated argument, while the other group is engaged in the singing of revolutionary songs, mostly Russian,—how is one to imagine all this without something in the way of special dimensions? The singing group marches halfway toward the arguing group—a challenge to unity, the song of the Internationale—and reluctantly marches back to its own meeting place.

There is a committee conference. Before the report comes back the lines are formed for a new march, this time to go all the way. Agreement is reported: a C. E. C. of ten members, the five C. L. P. candidates to stand elected, five C. P. members now to be chosen. The march proceeds; it is the only report to the anxious C. L. P. delegates,—the two groups merge into one another, all singing the Internationale. There is the grasping of hands, the embrace of comradeship; nothing is said—there is too much feeling for speech... Unity is achieved...

Recapitulating, the C. E. C. stands: Damon, Scott, Reinhardt, Delion, Caxton; Brown, Dawson, Klein, Flynn, Meyer. Alternates, in the following order, Zemlin (C. P.), Dubner (C. L. P.), Stone (C. P.), Jones (C. L. P.), Kerker (C. P.), Malcolm (C. L. P.), Kazbeck (C. P.), Logan (C. L. P.).

For International Secretary, Caxton replaces Brown; Damon and Meyer stand as International Delegates; Scott, alternate for Damon, Barry, alternate for Meyer.

An American convention of Communists. Yet there was, more likely than not, a majority of "foreigners", though the division was fairly even. But these were Communists who were vitally concerned about the class struggle in America, men and women who really expected to take part in this struggle; not those who toyed with the Communist movement here as a method of ingratiating themselves in Moscow.

It was one of the most inspiring things about this convention to hear delegates painfully struggling with the English language, no longer depending for expression on the artificial foreign-language caucuses of prior conventions, but making themselves one with all the other delegates in defiance of barriers of language or nationality.

Perhaps this was the greater "unity" achievement of this convention... Again and again the sentence was heard: "We have crossed the Rubicon." Every delegate was in the hands of his fellows; all subject to imprisonment, deportation, social and economic displacement. Yet most of the time,—not without thanks to the irrefragable wit of the convention secretary, Smyth,—the whole affair seemed like a jollification. Or perhaps it was the grim seriousness of it all that challenged relief in playfulness...

A revolutionary movement driven "underground" is apt to be driven away at the same time from its own petty animosities and quibbles. Forced to face the life and death character of the combat, it is likely to discard pretenses, evasions, purposeless quarrels about persons. Confusion gives way to clarity; hesitation yields to stern determination.

A convention of revolutionists—a convention which relentlessly searched the truth of its every word and the heart of its every delegate...

lack of chairs, Miss Alida C. Bowler, just back from Rumania after seven months service in social work, told a Seattle audience.

Miss Bowler declared that tons of socks knitted in this country had to be unraveled when they reached Europe and remade into clothing. Socks were used in place of paper bags in the distribution of sugar, she said. Tons of pajamas intended for relief were cut up and made into suits for children.

Miss Grace Harrington, back from Siberia where she was acting chief nurse of the American Red Cross, told the audience that the Russians were a kindly generous people rather than the half mad destroyers the American plutocrats would have them appear.

MOSCOW.—At the conference of the third international held in Moscow, May 2, Bukharin, Radek and Zinovieff were named as the committee to decide the question of admittance to the Communist International. The conference also decided in favor of Parliamentary action in so far as it serves the propagation of the revolutionary spirit.

MOSCOW.—The Soviet election in Omsk resulted in a communist victory. All elected delegates, 465, are members of the Communist party, 64 per cent of the qualified voters participated in elections.

At the last Congress of Soviets in Moscow, at which Kameney presided, the People's Commissar of Education, Lunacharsky, delivered a report stating that in Soviet Russia 1,650 schools were opened in 1919. Altogether there are now in Soviet Russia 50,000 schools of the first grade and 21,000 schools of the second grade, he stated.

In 1919, 150,000 pairs of boots were distributed to the needy school children.

To stimulate higher education, the Commissariat for Popular Instruction appropriated a sum of 140,000,000 rubles in its budget. The number of university students in Soviet Russia is now 153,000 including auditors at people's and peasants' universities, as well as the participants in a number of other courses. The number of professors is 5,500. In addition there are in Petrograd, Moscow, Voronezh, Kazan and Saratov various schools for the training of artists, attended by more than 4,000 students.

ABO, Finland.—The White Terror continues. Early in May the supreme court of Abo sentenced five workers to the penitentiary for a total of fourteen years. Besides they lost their citizenship rights. Their "crime" was "preparations for treason."

Rumanian children carry their own seats to school because of the general